

# Hoof Trimmers To Demonstrate Good Foot Care

**DAVE LEFEVER**  
Lancaster Farming Staff

**MANHEIM (Lancaster Co.)** — Dale Herr has been trimming dairy cow hooves for about 20 years. During that time, he has seen the need for skilled hoof trimmers grow.

While the number of dairy farms has been decreasing considerably, herd sizes keep growing. So have the number of cows that spend most or all of their time on concrete — and need more attention paid to their feet.

"We keep getting less customers but more cows (that need trimming)," said Herr, who grew up on a dairy farm near New Holland and now lives in Lititz.

He talked about his profession

recently while at work trimming hooves on the 450-cow dairy farm of Cletus and Dale Balmer, Manheim. As one of two regular hoof trimmers hired by the dairy, Herr visits the Balmers' herd the third week of each month to perform maintenance and corrective trimming.

Herr uses an electric six-bladed chipper wheel for about 70 percent of the trimming work, and reaches for his hand tools to do the rest. The combination of tools is just an individual preference, according to Herr. He noted that many trimmers use the chipper wheel for practically the entire job.

"I trimmed with only hand tools for 14 years and never

switched completely," Herr said.

Trimmers also have their own opinions on the best type of chute to hold the cow while trimming. While Herr uses the kind of turntable that rotates cows onto their side, some trimmers like the standing chutes that keep the cow upright.

According to Herr, this preference has more to do with the type of equipment the hoof trimmer is used to rather than one kind of chute being better than the other.

While healthy cows generally have their hooves trimmed once a year, Herr said some producers do twice-a-year maintenance trimming to help maximize the benefits of the extra foot care.

"The ideal time to trim is toward the end of the lactation when the cow is going into her dry period," Herr said. "Some producers also trim at the 150-day point in the lactation."

Cows with foot problems such as sole ulcers, footrot, hairy warts, and laminitis need to be trimmed and/or treated more frequently. Herr applies medication

and bandages, and keeps a log of problems for each herd.

Many of the dairy farms Herr visits in Lancaster and Chester counties are those of longtime customers. His own schedule is fully booked, but Herr still finds time to help promote better hoof care on dairy farms, and is a member of the National Hoof-trimmers Association.

"The hoof trimming industry at this stage in the game is not regulated," he said. "That opens the door to both good and bad trimmers."

Herr is one of the organizers for an upcoming hoof trimming clinic at the Lebanon Expo Center on April 4. The clinic is designed to "Help the farmer understand foot health better, and help the trimmer learn," Herr said.

The free clinic is set from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on April 4. Lunch is included.

Herr is hop-

ing about 400 dairy farmers and 70 hoof trimmers attend the clinic, which will include live hoof trimming demonstrations and lessons by veterinarians.

On hand will be Dan McFarland, Penn State extension ag engineer, to discuss cow facilities; Paul Neer to demonstrate hoof trimming; and Dr. Gary Grumble discussing the various types of foot disease.

Hoof trimmers helping to organize the event along with Herr are Paul Neer, Mifflin County; Paul Beiler, Lebanon County; Jason Charles, Lancaster County; Jim Zimmerman, Lancaster County; and Garth Campbell, Dauphin County.

For more information, call Herr at (717) 627-2371, or Paul Neer at (717) 935-5608.



Dale Herr uses a six-bladed chipper wheel to trim hooves at Balmer Bros. Farm, Manheim.

## DCP Sign-Up Deadline Nears

**POTTSVILLE (Schuylkill Co.)** — County Committee Chairperson, Ronald Troxell reminds farmers that the April 1 base selection deadline is almost upon us. Growers have until April 1 to make a base selection and provide the owner's agreement to participate in the direct and Counter Cyclical Payment Program (DCP). Missing this critical date could cause you to lose valuable program benefits.

Sign-up activities require that many growers visit the office more than once. Troxell suggests that growers contact the office

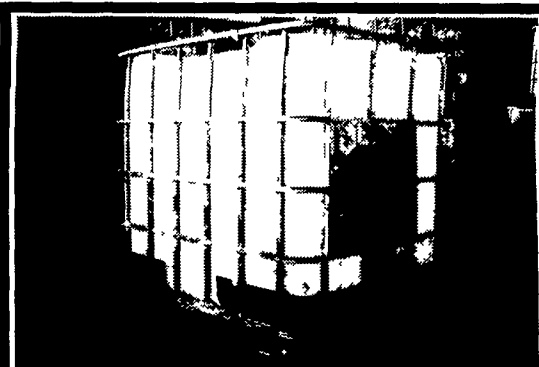
for an appointment prior to their visit. Office staff can then prepare for the visit to greatly speed the process.

The different options afforded by the program cause enrollment to take slightly longer than previous enrollment experiences. The required involvement of farm owners is a new twist, which can also take additional time. If a farm operator wishes to separate multi ownership tracts into separate farms another visit is required before the farms can be enrolled.

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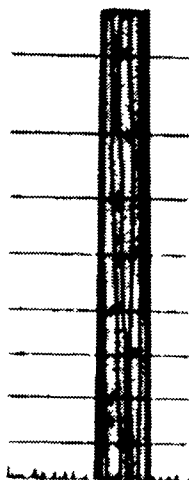
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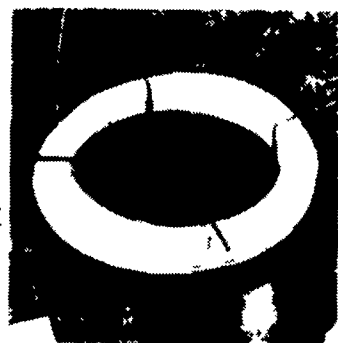
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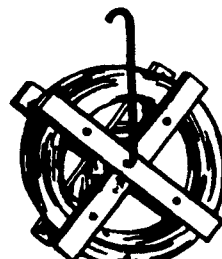


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